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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BEAUTY STANDARDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND BODY DISSATISFACTION

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### ABSTRACT

Adolescent mental health has long been a problem, and it has gotten worse in recent decades. Today societal influences have a role in developing these health issues. Today sociocultural pressures contribute to creating these health problems, and media is one of them. The media is widely regarded as the most influential factor in developing undesirable beauty ideals. Simultaneously, young women's use of social media has increased, implying increased exposure to unhealthy beauty standard. This study aims to learn how young women perceive the idealised beauty standard. In addition, the goal is to understand how people view its potential effects on their body image and dissatisfaction. As a result, marketers may gain a broader perspective and analyse the ethical implications of their social media marketing decisions. To better understand the subject, the researchers compiled a literature review on how social media influences beauty trends, body image, and self-esteem concerns. The study employed an online survey and a Google form to collect input from respondents, which was communicated via WhatsApp. As a result, the study employed a purposive sampling strategy. The data was analysed both descriptively and inferentially. The findings revealed a strong link between peer pressure and body dissatisfaction. On the other hand, internalisation and social comparison did not demonstrate a significant link with body dissatisfaction.

### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:*

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 Social Comparison,  
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Body image relates to an individual's behaviour and feelings about their body's respect. In today's culture, most teenagers want the "body goal" type, which may be characterised as slender, long legs, and, for some, natural beauty. A study conducted by Stefani(2019) found that attractive women were linked to both positive and negative stereotypes, and that these stereotypes affected their desire to be attractive. Blogs have been a popular and powerful platform for overweight women in the United States to grow and further develop discursive methods to resist gendered anti-fat discourses established by the media, legislatures, the field of health, and public health institutions over the last decade. (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015).

In Sweden, the most prevalent problem that young women face nowadays is mental health difficulties (Bertilsson & Gillberg 2017). Social media influence can lead adolescents to internalise society standards that is desirable for themselves, increasing the likelihood that they will suffer from body dissatisfaction (Uchôa et al, 2019).

Social media has been studied and discovered to be a two-edged sword affecting humans. The media portrays beauty ideals that cause women to be unsatisfied with their appearance. Women are dissatisfied with their appearances due to media depictions of beauty ideals. Because this norm is displayed in various media channels, some women adopt it as their own standards and internalise their displeasure with their bodies. It depends on the form of exposure at a much higher degree of impact during adolescence than at any other stage of the human life cycle, regardless of background, the influence of friends and self-esteem of a person (Ahmad, Idris, & Jing, 2019). In some countries, the connection between physical self-concept and body image revealed that women's body dissatisfaction had increased in eating disorders. (Alipoor, Goodarzi, Nezhad, & Zaheri, 2009). A study shows that 90% of women wished to alter some part of their physical bodies, most of which were their body shape and weight. (Etcoff, Orbach, Scott & D'Agostino, 2004; Calogero, Boroughs & Thompson, 2007)

Body dissatisfaction can cause eating disorders to women trying to change their appearance to look like the portrayed women in social media. According to Cash and Deagle (1997), in an extensive meta-analysis, body image dissatisfaction has been identified as a major risk factor for the origin of anorexia nervosa.

Women are unsatisfied with their bodies compared to men (Fallon, Harris, & Johnson, 2014; Grogan, 2016; Stefani, 2019) and are pressured to be attractive (Stuart & Donaghue, 2012; Stefani, 2019). Being pressured to be beautiful can lead to mental health issues, such as depression (Stevens, Herbozo, Morrell, Schaefer, & Thompson, 2017) and suicidal ideation (Rufino, Viswanath, Wagner & Patriquin, 2018)

This study aims to identify social comparison, internalisation, and peer influence affect the perception of adolescents' body image. Thus, the problem has been appropriately addressed. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between social comparison, internalisation, peer influence with body dissatisfaction.

A study is believed to provide insight on this topic since many women's perceptions of societal beauty ideals are affected by the societal environments in which they grow up. Furthermore, as many women from different countries have undergone transformations of society from time to time, it is safe to assume that there have been changes in women's perceptions of beauty standards.

To understand the motive of this study, research questions are created.

RQ1: What is the relationship between social comparison and body dissatisfaction?

RQ2: what is the relationship between internalisation and body dissatisfaction?

RQ3: what is the relationship between peer influence and body dissatisfaction?

Thus, the following are the objectives of this study;

RO1: To study the relationship between social comparison and body dissatisfaction

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RO2: To study the relationship between internalisation and body dissatisfaction

RO3: To study the relationship between peer influence and body dissatisfaction

Many research on body image in women have been conducted in an academic context. Women in college are less satisfied with their overall look and body image than teens, middle-aged women, and males. This study improves body image and self-esteem since it looks at physical activity patterns among physically active college women. A conceptual framework with an exploratory research approach was used to get a deeper understanding of the issues. Social media plays an essential role in people's self-image by informing and reflecting what people think is beautiful or appealing. This journal inspects social media's role in perceiving beauty ideals and how those ideas affect individual behaviour.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL COMPARISON AND BODY DISSATISFACTION**

The social comparison process involves comparing themselves with others to evaluate their attitudes, skills and traits. Indeed, individuals frequently turn to others as models for acting, thinking, and feeling to successfully coordinate economic transactions, political activity, and social relations. (Baldwin and Mussweiler, 2018). There is also some evidence that narratives may influence individuals' self-perceptions, motives, and behaviour in consistent ways with the storey and its characters, a process known as absorption. (Sestir and Green, 2010; Appel, 2011; Gabriel and Young, 2011; Richter et al., 2014). Women's dissatisfaction with their personal features may be influenced by the slim body ideal that circulates in Western society. Being thin is applauded, while being overweight is disliked. It should be highlighted that the slim body ideal and the thin is a good assumption are not the same thing. Similar comparisons will be more common with close friends, whereas with more distant connections, different comparisons will be more often. Close friends should be objectively more similar, but dissimilar comparisons with close friends should be avoided as well. Thus, the study hypothesised that,

H1: There is a relationship between social comparison and body dissatisfaction

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNALISATION WITH BODY DISSATISFACTION**

The internalisation of the societal beauty image portrayed in the media was related to beliefs that beauty will enhance essential areas of daily life, such as pleasure, adaptability, social skills, romantic ability, and employment chance. Self-objectification has been linked to various physical and mental health concerns in women since the introduction of objectification theory, including disordered eating, difficulties with physical and sexual activity, and internalising consequences, such as negative thoughts about the body and depression (Tiggemann, 2011). Women who are less satisfied with their bodies tend to wear clothes that conceal the body. At the same time, those who are more comfortable with their appearance choose clothing to accentuate the body. Given that some of these results disproportionately impact women, a deeper understanding of self-objectification may improve our understanding and approach to women's health. As such, this literature review seeks to explore how self-objectification relates to body dissatisfaction.

Women internalise others' perspectives towards them, resulting in a main conception of the self according to one's physical appearance. Theoretically, internalisation is associated with sexual objectification, with women's sexual characteristics detached from their personal identity in interpersonal interactions. The outcome of self-objectification is the lack of internalising one's physical attractiveness with one's identity and worth.

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Although some studies have established a direct link between self-objectification and disordered or restrained eating, others have found that the link is mediated by internalising symptoms such as body shame, depression, and appearance anxiety (White, 2013). Therefore, the study created the following hypothesis.

H2: There is a relationship between internalisation and body dissatisfaction.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEER INFLUENCE WITH BODY DISSATISFACTION

Peer influence is described as a dialogue and criticism that relates to acceptable standards and goals. Girls spend more time with their peers and appreciate their attitudes, ideals, and acts (Van Tergouw, 2011). As a result, peers significantly impact teens' body choices and acceptances, which can be good or bad.

The previous study has found a link between peer pressure and body dissatisfaction. According to research, there is a relationship between girls' perceptions of their friends' body dissatisfaction and their own level of unhappiness with their bodies. A study shows the researchers discovered that the more dissatisfied their peers were with their bodies, the more dissatisfied the individuals were with their appearances. (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2005; Giles, 2013). Another study found that peer conversations regarding appearance substantially impacted body image (Jones et al., 2004; Thompson et al., 2007; Matera, Nerini & Stefanile, 2013). Shroff and Thompson (2006) and Giles (2013) agreed that peer influence may risk body image issues, mental disorders, and low self-esteem. Hence, the study considers there is a probable relationship between peer influence and body dissatisfaction and shown below;

H3: There is a relationship between peer influence and body dissatisfaction.

Therefore, the study developed a conceptual framework (refer to figure 1) to help reduce body dissatisfaction among individuals. The independent variables consist of social comparison, internalisation and peer influence. In contrast, the dependent variable is body dissatisfaction.

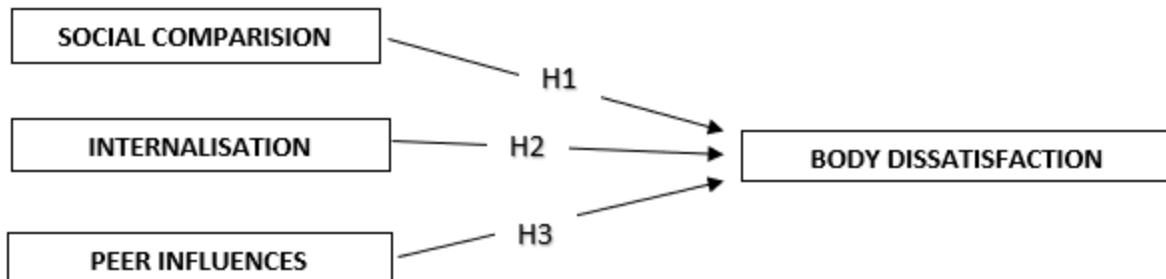


FIGURE 1: Conceptual Framework

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study used Google form to obtain data from respondents via an online survey. Respondents have simple access to the questionnaire because it was available online via a link sent over WhatsApp and Instagram.

The questionnaire was distributed to individuals aged 18 – 30 who are socially active online. This population is considered because they mainly own social media account. Using a 5-point Likert Scale, 1 for strongly disagree to 5

for strongly agree, to capture the respondents' response, the questionnaire consisted of 40 questions separated into four sections for each variable to capture the respondents' response.

The study used purposive sampling to gather data for the study. As a non-probability sampling, the purposive sampling approach succeeds when examining a particular cultural field (Tongos, 2007). Homogenous sampling would be equivalent in terms of ages, cultures, jobs, or life experiences. The goal is to concentrate on this specific resemblance and its relation to the subject at hand. (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). The sample size for this study was determined using Israel (2003) model for determining sample size. According to Israel (1992), a precision sample of  $\pm 5\%$  was obtained when the population was 2000; hence the sample size should be 300.

Before gathering data, researchers conducted a preliminary analysis to reduce the questionnaire bias issue via validity and reliability analysis. For the content validity test, the content expert was consulted to ensure all items were legitimate and could measure each variable.

Each variable's consistency was measured using the Cronbach Alpha value. Cronbach Alpha was established by Cronbach (1951) to measure a scale's or test's internal consistency, given as a number between 0 and 1, and is used for questions whose responses are on a scale (Quansah, 2017). The instrument in this study is considered reliable because the reliability test indicated 0.887.

In the study, a descriptive statistical analysis was performed. The data was displayed in frequency order. In addition, to test the research hypothesis, the study used an inferential analysis with a correlation test. |

#### 4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

**TABLE 1: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC**

Measurement	Item	Percentage %
Age	18 - 22	37.0
	23 - 26	47.0
	27 - 30	16.0
Gender	Male	29.5
	Female	70.5
How often do you use social media per day?	Less than an hour	2.7
	1-3 hours	18.1
	3- 5 hours	43.1
	More than 8 hours	36.1
Weight (kg)	35 - 45	10.5
	46 - 55	24.7
	55 - 56	15.1
	57 - 65	20.2
	66 - 75	21.1
	80 and above	8.1
	Other	0.3

Table 1 indicates the respondent demographic. The demographic analysis shows 43.1% respondent spend 3-5 hours using internet per day while the rest either spend less than three hours or more than eight hours a day. With the number of respondents who spend that many hours using the Internet can be enough to influence them with what the medias are portraying resulting dissatisfaction to their body as there are many contributions on the social media towards beauty standards.

Spending time on the Internet, particularly on social media platforms, has been related to poor body image in both adult and adolescent females (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016; Tiggemann & Slater, 2013; Franchina & Coco, 2018) Many respondents feel insecure or uncomfortable seeing the portrayed beauty standard and the more time they spend looking at it, the more affected they feel. Hence, all the dangerous health conditions may start to occur here as respondents feel the need to change their appearance.

**TABLE 2: SOCIAL COMPARISON**

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Somewhat Agree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly Agree

Item	Percentage %					Mean	Standard Deviation
	1	2	3	4	5		
I think that the social comparison results higher levels of anger and depression.	1.2	3.0	19.6	48.0	28.0	3.99	.841
I think that there are negative effects on young women's self-perception of physical attractiveness and self-esteem.	0.9	3.6	21.4	48.5	25.6	3.94	.833
I think that, when the comparison's goal is self-evaluation, it may be a threat to self-esteem.	0.6	5.1	23.2	47.6	23.5	3.88	.845
I think that individuals don't only compare themselves with others who are similar to them.	1.2	6.9	19.3	49.4	23.2	3.86	.891
I think that as they get older, young women are more likely to engage in social comparison with models presented in advertisements.	1.8	6.3	22.9	46.4	22.6	3.82	.916
I think that purchasing products will help you to improve shortcomings in physical attractiveness.	1.2	5.1	20.8	56.6	16.3	3.82	.807
I think that individual compares oneself with someone superior to them.	2.1	6.0	22.0	49.4	20.5	3.80	.905
I think that adolescent years show a decline in the perception of their attractiveness in line with their increase in age.	2.7	5.1	27.1	48.8	16.3	3.71	.894
I think that evaluating your physical appearance is based on what others judge as ideal beauty.	4.2	9.9	26.8	38.6	20.5	3.61	1.050
I think that self-evaluation is based on social comparison with others.	4.2	11.7	31.0	41.6	11.4	3.44	.983

The respondents agreed that if social comparison is seen as a self-evaluation, it may threaten the self-esteem (M=3.88, SD = .845), resulting in depression and increase the level of anger (M=3.99, SD=.841) and also gives negative effects on young women's perception that relates to their body image (M=3.94 SD=.833) This result was supported by Zuo (2014), that low self-esteem and mental health issues were associated with high levels of social comparison.

**TABLE 3: INTERNALISATION**

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Somewhat Agree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly Agree

Item	Percentage %					Mean	Standard Deviation
	1	2	3	4	5		
I believe that this matter may result in depression.	1.5	6.3	20.8	37.0	34.3	3.96	.970
I believe that women are more concerned than men of their body image and not control their weight.	1.5	4.2	19.6	49.4	25.3	3.93	.866
I believe that there are certain degrees of longing among young women to assimilate their appearances.	0.6	3.3	23.2	50.3	22.6	3.91	.799
I believe that this ideal created by society, refers to the observer's perspective of their physical appearance.	0.6	4.8	24.1	47.0	23.5	3.88	.843
I believe that the excessive attention towards physical appearance further diminishes the individual's other parts of cognitive and behavioural functioning	0.9	4.8	23.8	46.7	23.8	3.88	.858
I believe, I'm experiencing a significant increase in body-focused anxiety	2.4	3.0	25.9	44.0	24.7	3.86	.908
I believe that there is a distinction between internalisation and awareness	1.2	3.9	28.0	45.2	21.7	3.82	.856
I believe that the level of internalisation can highly predict body image.	1.2	4.5	29.5	45.8	19.0	3.77	.850
I believe that the ideals I'm trying to reach is impossible to achieve.	4.2	10.2	22.3	40.7	22.6	3.67	1.065
I believe in beauty ideals defined by society and took actions to meet these ideals.	5.4	7.2	20.5	50.0	16.9	3.66	1.018

Internalisation of beauty standards leads to overestimating the distance between one's actual body and the ideal, leading to dissatisfaction when the ideal is not met. Some research has proved the relationship between internalisation of beauty standards in the media and body dissatisfaction has been extensive in women (Cafri, Yamamiya, Brannick, & Thompson, 2005). Pliner, Chaiken & Flett (1990) mentioned that females are worried about their appearance compared to males to which the respondent agreed that women are more concerned about their body image compare to men (M=3.93, SD=.866), and my cause depression (M=3.96, SD=.970).



**TABLE 4: PEER INFLUENCE**

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Somewhat Agree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly Agree

Item	Percentage %					Mean	Standard Deviation
	1	2	3	4	5		
You and your friends talk about how your bodies would look in clothes.	1.5	12.3	20.8	41.3	24.1	3.74	1.007
You and your friends talk about how to look attractive.	2.7	11.4	26.8	29.8	19.3	3.61	1.008
You and your friends talk about how it is important always to look attractive.	2.7	11.4	29.5	35.2	21.1	3.61	1.027
You and your friends talk about what would you like your bodies to look like.	1.8	13.3	27.7	39.8	17.5	3.58	.985
You and your friends always talk about what can you do to look your best.	3.6	13.0	25.6	38.3	19.6	3.57	1.056
You and your friends talk about your figures.	3.6	14.2	26.5	36.1	19.6	3.54	1.069
Your friends mention that you would look better if you were thinner.	9.9	18.1	22.3	35.8	13.9	3.26	1.196
Your friends mention that you should go on diet.	12.0	19.6	21.7	31.6	15.1	3.18	1.252
Your friends mention you should build up muscles.	22.9	22.3	17.8	24.4	12.7	2.82	1.364
Your friends mention that you would look better if you had a more muscular build.	24.1	23.5	18.4	23.8	10.2	2.73	1.333

Because most individuals spend a lot of time with their peers, developing relationships with friends is critical to developing one's identity, as peer experiences generally provide an essential social background (Brown, Mory, & Kinney, 1994). In addition, conversation with peers can influence oneself to evaluate and accept their body both negative and positive ways. Majority of respondents agreed that them and their peers have common conversation on how to look their best (M=3.57, SD=1.056), and how to look attractive (M=3.61, SD=1.027).



**TABLE 5: BODY DISSATISFACTION**

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Somewhat Agree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly Agree

Item	Percentage %					Mean	Standard Deviation
	1	2	3	4	5		
I think I am satisfied with my face (facial features, complexion).	3.6	15.4	28.3	37.3	15.4	3.45	1.040
I think I am satisfied with my hair (colour, thickness, texture).	4.2	19.3	31.3	30.1	15.1	3.33	1.078
I think I am satisfied with my lower torso (buttocks, hips, thighs, legs).	7.5	19.3	30.4	30.7	12.0	3.27	1.120
I think I am satisfied with my mid-torso (waist, stomach).	7.2	19.6	29.5	31.0	12.7	3.22	1.120
I think I am satisfied with my upper torso (chest or breast, shoulder, arms).	8.7	18.7	31.0	29.5	12.0	3.21	1.042
I think I am satisfied with my weight.	9.3	20.2	33.7	26.8	9.9	3.20	1.116
I think I am satisfied with my height.	6.9	17.5	31.9	29.2	14.5	3.17	1.134
I think I am satisfied with my overall appearance.	5.1	19.9	34.3	30.1	10.5	3.11	1.138
I think I am satisfied with my muscle tone.	20.8	20.8	23.5	23.8	11.1	3.08	1.113
I think I am satisfied when I see myself in the mirror.	8.1	22.0	33.7	22.9	13.3	2.84	1.304

Body Dissatisfaction is the satisfaction of oneself. It is proven that women and men are insecure about their particular body parts. Exposure to idealised beauty standards, family and peer diets, demands to be slim, and weight teasing have all been identified as risk factors for body dissatisfaction (e.g., Field et al., 2001; Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002; Paxton, Eisenberg et al., 2006; Stice & Whitenton, 2002). The respondents somewhat agreed that they are satisfied with their hair colour, thickness and texture (M=3.33, SD=1.078) and their upper torso (chest or breast, shoulder, arms) (M=3.21,SD=1.042), the respondents also agreed that they somewhat agree with how they look at themselves in the mirror (M=2.84, SD=1.304).

**Table 6: Guildford Rule of Thumb Table**

Value, r	Strength
<0.2	Negligible Relationship
0.2 to 0.4	Low Relationship
0.4 to 0.7	Moderate Relationship
0.7 to 0.9	High Relationship
>0.9	Very High Relationship

**Table 7: The result of the correlation test for the level of Social comparison and Body dissatisfaction**

		R	P < .05	Result
Social Comparison	→ Body Dissatisfaction	-.025	.648	Not Significant

The correlation test finding for the level of Social Comparison and Body dissatisfaction is shown in table 7. The analysis concludes that H1 is not supported. This can be explained that the respondents do not compare themselves to the point that they feel dissatisfied with their bodies. Therefore, other people’s attitudes, skills and traits do not involve with social comparison process.

**Table 8: The result of the correlation test for the level of Internalisation and Body dissatisfaction**

		r	P < .05	Result
Internalisation	→ Body Dissatisfaction	-.075	.173	Not Significant

The correlation test finding for the level of internalisation and Body dissatisfaction is shown in table 8. The analysis concludes that H2 is not supported. A valid explanation for this is that respondents feel satisfied with body image because they do not reach the beauty standards depicted in social media. Hence, respondents believe that internalisation does not relate to body dissatisfaction.

**Table 9: The result of the correlation test for the level of Peer Influence and Body dissatisfaction**

		<b>r</b>	<b>P &lt; .05</b>	<b>Result</b>
Peer Influence	→ Body Dissatisfaction	.123	.025	Significant

The correlation test finding for peer influence and body dissatisfaction is shown in table 9. The analysis concludes that H3 is supported. The relationship between peer influence and body dissatisfaction is correlated and shows a moderate relationship. Based on the descriptive analysis, the respondents agreed that they converse about the body and look appearance with their peers. According to Clark and Tiggemann (2006), compared to media influence, conversation about body appearance between peers is related to body dissatisfaction. This may be because respondents believe body dissatisfaction has connections with peers. For that reason, peers influence most of the choices and acceptances of teenagers towards the body.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The empirical data confirm that the transmitted beauty ideal on social media negatively impacts young women, but they are affected differently. Examining idealised photos on social media has various effects, with the positives outnumbering the negatives. The young women agreed on how the beauty standards led to comparing themselves to social media representations of idealised women. They also mentioned how they frequently feel as if they are never good enough compared with idealised women on social media. Most participants stated that this comparison made them feel even more dissatisfied with their bodies.

With all the effort put into making this study possible, many barriers are noticed for every part that needed decision and conclusions. To address one of the limitations of this research, it would have to be the methodology of collecting the data. Using online platforms have limited us to widen our sample size of gender. Generally, this research was open to both genders, male and female. However, according to the study's data, 70.5% of respondents were female. According to McCreary & Sasse (2000) research, men and boys are increasingly dissatisfied with their bodies. Body image is an issue for guys throughout their lives. Therefore, the data are biased only to female respondents. Hence, it is suggested to collect demographic data equally for future research to-get more valid and significant results.

Our current model focuses on self-concept and human interactions. It would be interesting to add on another variable to analyse how social media affects their body dissatisfaction. Social media has become one of the environmental forces influencing everyday life and progress; this will aid in the prediction of solutions for future generations.

Furthermore, we believe that a quantitative study evaluating this association is helpful. This study implies that social media and its transmitted beauty standard may contribute to body dissatisfaction and body image problems among young women. Statistical judgments and the relationship between the variables can be measured by performing quantitative research analysing the possible relationships among the variables stated in the proposition for development. As a result, the opportunity to analyse the strength of social media's impact in the sociocultural context would be possible.

The study concludes these important points as a summary of the collected results. The findings reveal evidence of peer influence and body dissatisfaction. The goals mentioned are to assess social comparison, internalisation, and peer influence on body dissatisfaction.

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